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PREPARATIONS FOR THE FOURTH WORLD CONFERENCE ON WOMEN: ACTION FOR EQUALITY, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE

Report of the Inter-sessional Working Group of the Commission on the Status of Women

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ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

A. Opening and duration of the session

1. The Working Group met at United Nations Headquarters from 10 to 14 January 1994, in accordance with Economic and Social Council decision 1993/234 of 27 July 1993. The Working Group held five meetings (1st to 5th) and a number of informal meetings as an open-ended committee of the whole.

2. The session was opened by the Secretary-General of the Fourth World Conference on Women. In her introductory statement, she recalled that the Commission on the Status of Women had recommended that an inter-sessional working group be convened in early January 1994 in order to have more time to further develop the Platform for Action that was expected to be the major outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995. She introduced an informal conference room paper on the Platform for Action. That paper took into consideration the structure and main features proposed by the Commission at its thirty-seventh session. She stated that the Platform for Action should contain a limited number of priority areas of concern and action for which Governments and civil society should be accountable, as well as a time-frame for its implementation to the year 2000, in keeping with the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women. The paper also took into account the fact that the Platform for Action should address the need to achieve more balance in the roles and relationships of men and women rather than focusing on women as a separate group. She then referred to the individual sections of the conference room paper and concluded by stating that the Platform for Action should emerge as a commitment on the part of the women and men of the world to work together in unity to change the status quo, in which women experienced inequality because of their gender.

B. Attendance

3. Representatives of 40 States members of the Commission on the Status of Women attended the session. Observers for other States Members of the United Nations and for non-member States, representatives of organizations of the United Nations system and observers for intergovernmental, non-governmental and other organizations also attended. A list of participants is contained in annex II to the present report.

C. Election of officers

4. At the 1st and 2nd meetings, on 10 January, the Working Group elected the following officers by acclamation:

Chairman: Djénébou Kaba (Côte d'Ivoire)

Vice-Chairmen: Patricia B. Licuanan (Philippines)
Olga Pellicer (Mexico)
Joke Swiebel (Netherlands)

Rapporteur: Lyudmila Bozhkova (Bulgaria)

D. Agenda and organization of work

5. At the 1st meeting, on 10 January, the Working Group adopted its provisional agenda, contained in document E/CN.6/WG/1994/1, which read as follows:

1. Election of officers.

2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.

3. Structure of the draft Platform for Action.

4. Adoption of the report of the Inter-sessional Working Group.

6. Also at the 1st meeting, the Working Group appointed the Vice-Chairman of the Group, Olga Pellicer (Mexico), coordinator for consultations on the draft Platform for Action.

E. Documentation

7. The documents before the Working Group are listed in annex III to the present report.

F. Consultations with non-governmental organizations

8. A written statement submitted by a non-governmental organization in accordance with rule 76 of the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council (E/5975/Rev.1) is listed in annex III to the present report.

G. Adoption of the report of the Working Group

9. At the 5th meeting, on 14 January 1994, the Working Group considered item 4 of its agenda entitled "Adoption of the report of the Inter-sessional Working Group".

10. At the same meeting, the Rapporteur of the Working Group introduced the draft report. The Working Group adopted the report, as orally revised by the Rapporteur.

11. Also at the same meeting, the Working Group adopted the following structure for the draft Platform for Action:

I. Statement of mission.

II. Global framework.

III. Critical areas of concern.

IV. Strategic objectives deriving from the critical areas of concern and action to be taken:

Introduction containing the themes: Equality, Development and Peace;

Strategic objectives deriving from the critical areas of concern;

Action to attain each strategic objective and responsibility for implementation.

V. Financial arrangements.

VI. Institutional arrangements for implementing and monitoring the Platform for Action.

12. The Working Group then took note of the conference room papers prepared for the committee of the whole, containing a summary of its discussion, submitted by the Secretary-General of the Fourth World Conference on Women, and agreed to annex them to the report of the Working Group (see annex I). The Working Group also agreed that delegations would have the opportunity to submit further comments to the Secretariat, and the Secretary-General of the Conference would take them into consideration in preparing the documentation for the thirty-eighth session of the Commission on the Status of Women.

Annex I

STRUCTURE OF THE PLATFORM FOR ACTION OF THE FOURTH WORLD CONFERENCE ON WOMEN

1. During its deliberations on agenda item 3, the open-ended committee of the whole of the Working Group requested the secretariat of the Fourth World Conference on Women to prepare a summary of the statements made in the committee in order to assist in their deliberations.

2. The Working Group proposed the following structure for the draft Platform for Action:

I. Statement of mission.

II. Global framework.

III. Critical areas of concern.

IV. Strategic objectives deriving from the critical areas of concern and action to be taken:

Introduction containing the themes: Equality, Development and Peace;

Strategic objectives deriving from the critical areas of concern;

Action to attain each strategic objective and responsibility for implementation.

V. Financial arrangements.

VI. Institutional arrangements for implementing and monitoring the Platform for Action.

3. The following is a summary of the debate on the structure of the draft Platform for Action.

I. Statement of mission

4. Many representatives emphasized that the statement of mission should be concise and dynamic. Some delegations called for emphasis on the acceleration of the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies in critical areas of concern, sharing of power, equality between men and women, and the important links between human rights of women and societal change. The importance of depicting women positively and recognizing women's potential and their positive role as agents of change, not as objects, was stressed. Recognition of the positive impact of the advancement of women on men and on development as a whole should also be reflected. One representative suggested that the mission was to define the next context in which the advancement of women must take place, and noted the importance of seeking to shape new trends

and opportunities and eliminate the obstacles to the advancement of women in this context. Some delegations proposed to reflect the goals of equality, development and peace in the statement of mission, while others considered they should be taken up elsewhere in the Platform for Action. A few representatives suggested broadening the statement to include new areas of concern, such as the concept of mainstreaming women in all areas throughout their life cycles, sustainable development and HIV/AIDS.

II. Global framework

5. The majority of delegations found it useful to include this section in the draft Platform for Action. They suggested that the draft include:

(a) New technologies and communications and their impact on trade, investments, job opportunities and security;

(b) The impact of democratization on women's advancement;

(c) Achievements in the advancement of women since 1975;

(d) The international economic situation and national policies, such as structural adjustment and debt policies, which have an impact on economic empowerment of women;

(e) The new opportunities for the advancement of women and not only the obstacles;

(f) Results of the regional reports;

(g) Results of other international conferences.

6. Some delegations suggested the separation of the global framework from the diagnosis of critical areas of concern.

7. One delegation expressed the opinion that this section was not necessary.

III. Critical areas of concern

8. Several delegations expressed the opinion that this section of the draft Platform for Action was meant to be a diagnosis and should be supported by objective, concise and quantitative data. The identification of critical areas of concern was important because it showed the problems and obstacles preventing the full implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies. The subsequent section on strategic goals and objectives should follow the strategic diagnosis as a separate section and suggest practical action.

9. Several delegations noted that the basis for the Platform for Action remained resolution 37/7 of the Commission on the Status of Women. It should take into account therefore the particular needs and situation of women having special concerns such as refugee, displaced and migrant women and women living

in conflict areas, as stated in that resolution. A few delegations and the representative of a specialized agency called for specific consideration of the situation of rural women.

10. Some delegations suggested an overall chapter on strategic goals and actions which would include the idea of mainstreaming the issue of gender in all activities and sectors of society. One delegation proposed that the opening paragraph should discuss the interrelatedness of all critical areas of concern and the three themes: equality, development and peace, and lead directly to the strategies.

11. Many delegations stated that the results achieved by other conferences held before 1995, in particular the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the World Conference on Human Rights, the International Conference on Population and Development and the World Summit for Social Development, should be taken into account, as well as the results of the previous work of the Commission on the Status of Women, in particular its consideration of priority themes under equality, development and peace. The results of the first review and appraisal of the Forward-looking Strategies, namely, the 24 recommendations contained in Economic and Social Council resolution 1990/15, and all other pertinent resolutions should also be considered. Further development of relevant indicators should be undertaken in relation to the areas of concern.

12. Some delegations stressed the importance of a life-cycle approach in all critical areas of concern, which would avoid neglecting the particular situation women are facing at the different stages of their lives and draw attention to the particular situation of young girls and elderly women.

13. One delegation proposed reordering the sequence of the eight areas of concern by importance, starting with sharing of power and continuing with economic and social rights.

14. Several delegations suggested additional areas of concern, including the following:

(a) The girl child, focusing on the importance of girls' access to food, medical treatment and education and on their vulnerability to violence, forced prostitution and trafficking;

(b) The important role of the media and information, either as a separate critical area of concern or to integrate it with other areas, in particular that on violence against women. Some delegations stressed the importance of changing the image of women that was being transmitted by the media and called for the media to play an active role in raising public awareness of women's human rights. A number of delegations stressed the need for women to have access to information. Others asked for an increased number of women in decision-making positions in the mass media, including advertising.

15. Several delegations expressed the view that the last of the five strategic goals set out in resolution 37/7 of the Commission on the Status of Woman, that is, to inspire a new generation of women and men working together for equality, should be included as a critical area of concern. One delegation stressed the

key role men should play in promoting women's rights and the profit they could gain for themselves from gender equality. Education was identified as one means of changing the patterns of behaviour of men and women.

16. The comments made on the proposed critical areas of concern are given below.

Inequality in the sharing of power and decision-making at all levels

17. Many delegations stated that the emphasis in this area should be on equal sharing of power by women and men and the need to change existing power structures rather than simply gain equal access to existing power structures. Experience showed that women were often relegated to token roles within the existing structures and that their right to participation was often not observed. The diagnosis and statement relating to this area of concern should reflect this. The right to full participation in decision-making at all levels and in all spheres of life, including such areas as security, defence, foreign affairs and finance, should be addressed. Power and decisions at the family, community and local levels should be shared. Interaction between the highest and grass-roots levels of decision-making should be emphasized. The topic of women and men working together should be mentioned as this constitutes a good basis for the future sharing of power in all spheres of life. One delegation recalled the relevance of article 7 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Another delegation mentioned the negative impact on society of women's gross underrepresentation in power structures. A few delegations suggested that women's reproductive rights be included since the right to decide on the number and spacing of children was essential for women's self-determination and all forms of participation in other spheres of life. One delegation stated that the existing inequalities in power structures and decision-making not only undermined democracy, but also violated basic human rights. A few delegations pointed to inequality as a cause of women's unequal economic position. A few delegations proposed including the question of unequal participation of women in decision-making at the regional and international levels in such organizations as the United Nations, the European Union and the Organization of African Unity.

Insufficient mechanisms at all levels to promote the advancement of women

18. Representatives emphasized the important role of national machinery for promoting the advancement of women and monitoring change. National machineries should be reconstituted or established as enabling and networking bodies with appropriate political, financial and technical support. National machineries should be the focal points for mainstreaming women's perspective in all spheres through gender sensitization at all levels of decision-making. National machineries should have access to mass media in order to provide the real image of women and reflect their contribution to society.

19. Some representatives stressed the need also to establish focal points in all key ministries and institutions with the task of incorporating and monitoring a gender approach and accountability for the advancement of women.

20. A few representatives underlined the importance of supporting, keeping or establishing focal points for women in multilateral organizations, with access to necessary political and financial support to monitor progress in the advancement of women.

Lack of awareness of, and commitment to, internationally and nationally recognized women's rights

21. A number of delegations stressed the need to include the issue of women's legal literacy and human rights education and training. Such education and awareness-raising should include both international standards and national legal regulations such as constitutions and penal, commercial and civil codes. The gap between the de jure and the de facto legal situation of women should be addressed, as well as measures for redressing it. A few delegations noted the need for legal protection of women's images in mass media as part of their human rights. Violations of the human rights of women should be prohibited by law. Many delegations stated that the term "human rights of women" should be used consistently throughout the document instead of "women's rights". Reference should be made to the main international human rights instruments, such as the Covenants on Human Rights, and their relevance to women, as well as specific instruments particularly pertinent to the protection of the human rights of women, of which the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was the most prominent. The importance of universal adherence to the Convention was emphasized by many in this regard as well as the need for the elimination of basic cultural reservations to the Convention. A few delegations mentioned the need to improve international standards for the human rights of women. One delegation stated that item 3 could be divided into two sections: one on legal literacy and awareness of the human rights of women and the second on the lack of commitment to the issue.

Poverty

22. Many delegations emphasized that poverty continued to be a major challenge for the international community and countries themselves. Its eradication was on the agenda of other United Nations conferences. It was important to provide a gender perspective on the issue of poverty in all forthcoming international meetings. Several delegations stressed that poverty as a concept was not only deprivation of basic human needs and opportunities, but, if taken in a broader social context, was also social and political exclusion and violation of the human rights of women. Women constitute the majority among the poor sections of the population and experience a disproportionate burden of poverty. Women and men experience poverty differently and unequally and if those differences were not taken into account the causes of poverty would not be understood or dealt with. Women were marginalized in the sense that they were not recognized as full and equal partners and the risk of becoming poor was higher for women. The success of sustainable development and eradication of poverty depends on the recognition of women as principal actors of development.

23. Several delegations noted that the economic crisis, the international debt crisis and subsequent adjustment policies have had particularly grave implications for women, having constrained their activities as care-givers and providers for families and households. Consideration of the issue of poverty

should include an analysis of the impact of structural adjustment policies on women.

24. Rural women constitute the majority in many developing countries and should be given special attention when poverty issues are considered. Women in rural areas often lack access to land, credit and technology. This limits their ability to take advantage of the commercialization of agriculture and to keep their economic independence.

25. A few delegations mentioned the necessity of establishing support services for women in poverty. Others noted that a life-cycle approach should be applied. The existing discrimination against the girl child should be taken into account, as that contributes to intergenerational transmission of poverty. The goal of women's equality should start with ensuring equality for girls from infancy to adolescence. A few delegations mentioned the role of the informal sector in reduction of poverty. Policy actions to modify the constraints that influence the characteristics of female work in the informal sector were required.

Inequality in women's access to and participation in the definition of economic structures and policies and the productive process itself

26. Many delegations suggested that the issue of employment should be covered under this item. Economic independence was an important basis for achieving equality between men and women. Economic independence implied not only productive employment, but also entrepreneurship, social security and recognition of household work. However, many delegations stressed that the growth in female labour force participation had not brought changes in the pattern of female employment, as women were still concentrated in low paid, low prestige jobs with low upward mobility in comparison with men. Labour markets were still highly segregated and women were concentrated in traditional female occupations.

27. Several delegations stressed that everywhere women were paid less than men and, in addition, men were more likely to have regular full-time work and receive greater seniority. In that respect, the implementation of the principle "equal pay for work of equal value" was the way to achieve equality and should be given serious consideration. Increased wages for working women would increase women's power and autonomy. Many delegations stated that the increase in female employment had not brought about a redistribution of family responsibilities between men and women, as women still had the bulk of such responsibility. It was necessary to facilitate the sharing of family responsibilities between men and women. One delegation emphasized that men should be encouraged to participate in all types of employment, including flexible types of work. The role of men should have a new meaning. Moreover, the work women performed in the family and at home was not recognized or valued by society. A few delegations stressed that housework should be included in the system of national accounts.

28. A few delegations stressed the importance of training for women in order to achieve equality in the labour market. Several delegations stated that the employment system should be changed in such a way as to incorporate new

developments and meet the needs not only of men but of women as well. One delegation stressed the specific discrimination of elderly women in the labour market in countries in economic transition.

Inequality in access to education, health and employment and other means of maximizing awareness of women's rights and the use of their capacities

29. Several delegations suggested that the topics of education, health and employment be treated separately in this chapter. The issue of employment could be moved up to the previous section. However, specific targets should be set for each area and progress measured constantly. With regard to health, a few delegations referred to the special health conditions of women and in particular to the importance of family planning. One delegation mentioned the negative effects of the unavailability of health and education services for women in many developing countries. Another delegation noted that the problem was not only access to health, but also reproductive medicine and scientific developments. One delegation also stressed that the linkage between health and education and the advancement of the status of women should not be oversimplified. In developed countries, traditional educational choices of girls and women led to segregation in the labour market. The quality and results of education needed careful evaluation. It was suggested that emphasis be placed on the lack of access to education and professional training which affected in particular the girl child, especially in rural areas, and women who wished to re-enter professional life and therefore needed mid-career training. The achievement of literacy for all women remained the first goal. One delegation proposed including access to justice along with access to health, employment and education under this area of concern.

Violence against women

30. Many delegations emphasized that the wording of this section should be consistent with the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, adopted by the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session (resolution 48/104, annex), the report of the Secretary-General on measures to eradicate violence against women in the family and society (E/CN.6/1994/4) and recommendations 12 and 19 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. One delegation noted that the most severe violations of women's self-determination consisted in the wilful abortion of female foetus, sale of organs, mutilation of the girl child and sale of girls for purposes of prostitution. As one delegation stated, violence against women was a violation of women's human rights and dignity.

31. Several delegations stressed the need to indicate regional disparities when looking at the issue of violence against women. Violence against refugee and displaced women called for special attention. Several delegations also mentioned the incidence of sexual violence against the girl child, in particular through trafficking, forced prostitution and child prostitution to avoid AIDS/HIV infection. Violence against migrant women was also mentioned by one delegation.

Effects on women of continuing national and international armed or other kinds of conflicts

32. Many delegations suggested including the question of refugee, displaced and migrant women in this section, as well as women affected by armed conflicts, war-related violence, including rape, ethnic cleansing, physical abuse and torture. One delegation suggested that the issue of refugee and migrant women be included under a separate, new heading. A few delegations referred to the issue of urban migration in which women were economic refugees and victims of various forms of discrimination, including ethnic, religious, racial, national and sexual, as requiring attention. One delegation referred to rape and forced reproduction of some groups of women refugees in camps as new instruments of war violence and warfare. Many delegations emphasized that the following aspects of the situation of women in armed conflicts should be included: women bear a disproportionate share of the negative consequences of armed conflicts although they are seldom involved in the decision-making processes leading to such conflicts; they are almost completely excluded from the peace process at the national and international levels. Thus, attention should also be focused on the new roles of women in the peaceful resolution of conflicts, preventive diplomacy, restoration of peace and the peacemaking process. While accepting the main thrust of this section, some delegations considered it necessary to redraft it, in order to avoid the impression of women being helpless victims of conflicts. One delegation noted the inner controversy between the traditional portrayal of women as peace-loving and the demand for power sharing in defence or military operations.

IV. Strategic objectives deriving from the critical areas of concern and action to be taken

A. Strategic objectives

33. With respect to the section on strategic objectives, it was suggested that this section of the draft Platform for Action begin with an introduction on the continuing themes of equality, development and peace.

34. Many representatives proposed that the wording of the first objective contained in document E/CN.6/WG/1994/CRP.1, i.e., "to strengthen factors that promote the full participation of women in decision-making at all levels and in all areas of society and to eliminate factors that prevent it", should be strengthened and sharpened. For example, it should call for ensuring, not merely promoting, participation. One delegation noted that reference should be made to democratization, since full participation can only exist in a democracy. Several representatives proposed referring to active and integrated participation of women in structures of power and influence as well as their involvement in the decision-making process and their equitable access to power. Some delegations noted that strategic objectives would be more realistic when they arose from country situations and regional perspectives, and that important ideas would be fed into the Platform for Action from national reports and regional preparatory meetings.

35. Several representatives stated that the concept of full and equal partnership of women with men at all levels and in all areas of society, beginning in the family, should be reflected.

36. A number of delegations suggested that the objective refer not only to sharing power equally, but also to changing the social construct of power and inspiring a new generation of women and men to work together to ensure the sharing of power.

37. One representative noted the importance of highlighting the role of rural women and cooperation between rural and urban women. She suggested that protocols to protect rural women be developed, taking into account the important contribution of rural women and the need to reduce their burdens in domestic and agricultural work.

38. One representative emphasized that women should not be presented as passive recipients of measures. Full and equal participation should be specified at all levels, beginning in the family. The suggestion was made that equality be considered in political, economic, social, legal and administrative fields, and that it was important not only to ensure that women have an equal share in the process of decision-making, but also in the outcomes.

39. The second strategic objective contained in document E/CN.6/WG/1994/CRP.1 was "to strengthen factors that ensure women's equitable access to education, health and related services, employment, science and technology and to land, capital and other factors of production, and to eliminate the factors that accentuate poverty among women and prevent them from overcoming the circumstances that keep them in that situation".

40. With respect to this objective, most delegations proposed dividing it into two objectives. Many suggested "overcoming poverty" as the first objective and "promoting access" the second. A few delegations suggested dividing it into four objectives: poverty, education, health and employment. Others proposed a separate strategic objective on education. Several called for a new critical area of concern on environment and sustainable development, with a corresponding strategic objective on women and management of the environment.

41. Many delegations expressed the need for a strong and more specific formulation of the strategic objective, taking into account women's life cycle, focusing more on causes than on effects, and extending the notion of access to include active roles and linking to the international economic environment.

42. Some delegations expressed the view that women's needs for health services were different from men's and that women needed more than equal access, they needed to eliminate all practices that have negative impacts on women's and girls' health. They specified that access to education should be at all levels and in all areas, oriented towards creating a new generation aware of human rights, democracy and changing roles of men and women. It was also stressed that access to education was not enough; it should be complemented by stimulation and support. Reference was made to the objective of ownership by rural women.

43. A few delegations proposed addressing the need for women's increased information concerning economically viable employment and culture. Others were concerned about the impact of external factors on the advancement of women. One delegation stressed the importance of involvement of youth in development.

44. A few delegations suggested expanding the objective on poverty to promote the self-reliance of women, human rights and the economic empowerment of women.

45. One delegation noted that the ultimate goal of this strategic objective and all others should be to change the traditional roles of women and men.

46. One delegation noted that analysing strategic objectives for women's advancement should be seen in connection with achieving other social goals.

47. One delegation suggested adding as a strategic objective the need to eliminate the adverse effects of structural adjustment on women, another mentioned eliminating problems of debt, while others commented on lofty goals to change the global situation.

48. With respect to the third strategic objective contained in document E/CN.6/WG/1994/CRP.1, i.e., "to promote the role of women in achieving and maintaining peace, and to eliminate all kinds of violence against women and its causes", several representatives stated that it should be divided into at least two separate objectives to make a clear distinction between violence against women and human rights of women, i.e., one objective should deal with the role of women in achieving and maintaining peace; another objective should deal with the elimination of all kinds of violence against women; a third objective could be added specifically on human rights of women.

49. Since very few women were participating in decision-making in the areas of international peace and defence, some representatives suggested placing emphasis on ensuring women's role in the maintenance of peace and conflict resolution. One representative suggested mentioning the equality of rights between men and women in achieving and maintaining peace. One representative suggested linking the violation of human rights with the safeguarding of women's and men's dignity.

50. One representative suggested replacing the word "violence" with the word "discrimination" so that all kinds of violence and discrimination could be considered together.

B. Action to be taken

51. The Working Group also discussed the approach to be taken concerning the formulation of action to implement the strategic objectives. Representatives noted that it would be necessary to strive to define action that would have general application as well as application in specific national situations. Several delegations drew attention to relevant United Nations documents and studies on decision-making, national machineries and human rights of women prepared since 1987, including the recommendations contained in Economic and Social Council resolution 990/15 on the results of the first review and

appraisal of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies, which should be reviewed in drafting action recommendations in these areas. Many delegations suggested that action in relation to strategic objectives dealing with women's equality might be grouped under the following headings: women in decision-making; national machineries and human rights of women.

52. A number of representatives proposed that action be taken to ensure that a gender perspective was reflected at all levels of capacity building, planning, research, reporting, monitoring and implementation of policies, and that gender-desegregated statistics and indicators of progress regarding the advancement of women in all areas were systematically compiled and improved upon given their primary importance for analyses of women's participation in decision-making at all levels, as well as for the functioning of national machineries, and for mainstreaming women's perspective and increasing gender sensitivity.

53. Many delegations attached importance to action related to a possible strategic objective on human rights of women. In this connection, the need for universal ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was emphasized, as well as the inclusion of its provisions in national legislation. Many delegations mentioned the 1993 Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, as well as the need for education and training in the area of human rights. Emphasis was given to action to be taken to achieve legal literacy and awareness by women of their rights.

54. Many delegations stressed the importance of women's equal access to power (power sharing) and equality in decision-making at all levels and in all spheres of life, ranging from legislative bodies to top executive posts, the family and grass-roots organizations. Such participation, which was also essential for the development of civic society and democracy, should be encouraged, promoted and/or facilitated by Governments, national machineries, political parties and non-governmental organizations. Many representatives said that action should be proposed for the participation of women in decision-making in non-traditional areas such as, for example, finance or development. In this connection, special attention should be given to ways to provide appropriate education and training to women as well as social support services enabling them to reconcile their professional/political participation with the family. Such factors as an increased number of female candidates nominated for election by political parties and political and mass media campaigns to vote for female candidates also might significantly increase the participation of women. A few delegations noted the decisive role of appropriate policies and their implementation by Governments, parliaments and political parties for an increase in political participation of women in the public sector. Several delegations noted the low-level representation of women in decision-making in the private sector. Interventions could be made through incentives by Governments to private institutions to follow equality principles in their employment and promotion policies. Some delegations stressed the importance of gender awareness and commitment to the advancement of women at top levels and, in particular, to the responsibility of women in positions of power to promote other women and to create gender-sensitive role models.

55. Many delegations referred to the need for action to improve the situation of women in national and international civil services. They noted that the

choice of means aimed at increasing participation of women at the highest levels of the civil service should be appropriate to the tradition, culture and stage of development of the country and that the final choice should be made at the national level. Nevertheless, some regulations and policies were needed in this regard. Many delegations spoke against fixed quotas, and indicated that targets and goals at both national and international levels were more compatible with the concept of partnership of men and women in all spheres of life and with democratic practice. However, some delegations found quota systems advantageous in their national contexts. A few made reference to the "critical mass" theory, noting that improvements could hardly be achieved without clear regulations. Some delegations drew attention to the situation of women in the United Nations system and suggested that further action be taken to recruit and promote women on an equal basis within the United Nations system.

56. Many delegations spoke about action to strengthen the role of national machinery for women's advancement at the national level. Some members said that the location of a national machinery in the country should depend on the political system, culture and tradition and that there were a variety of models. It was generally accepted that, in order to be efficient, the machinery had to be placed at the highest political level and have an adequate budget. Existing national machineries should be empowered and new ones established in those countries where they do not exist. Their general functions, mandate and role should be further elaborated on the basis of the 1988 United Nations expert group meeting on the subject and the related decisions of the Commission on the Status of Women. One delegation drew attention to the so-called "streamlining" of national machineries, which in some countries had led to their de facto disappearance.

57. As to action to be considered in connection with the human rights of women and related legal regulations, many delegations underlined the idea of appointing ombudspersons at the national level to monitor the implementation of existing legal standards in the area of equality and human rights of women; to provide legal assistance in cases of discrimination, and to oversee legal and constitutional guarantees of equality. One delegation suggested that an ombudsperson be appointed in the Centre for Human Rights in order to take care of relevant cases of discrimination against women and violations of human rights of women. Another delegation stated that the institution of ombudsperson should be organized in accordance with national needs and that it did not have to be limited to one person. There could be many, covering various specialized areas. A few delegations referred to inequality prevailing at two levels - de jure and de facto - the latter being more widespread. It was suggested that action to achieve equality of rights and to develop workable legal standards be addressed to both men and women in education and awareness-raising programmes designed for that purpose. Women's issues, including human rights of women, should not be separated from issues affecting men, as men have to be involved in order to change social attitudes. Public debate and involvement of decision makers was considered important to change behaviour in protecting women's human rights.

58. During the discussion of action to be taken with respect to the objective related to development, contained in document E/CN.6/WG/1994/CRP.1, many representatives stressed that women were active agents of the process of development and not passive beneficiaries. As a result of existing inequalities

and their status in society, women had been particularly affected by the deterioration in terms of trade, structural adjustment policies, debt, ecological disasters, political instability, war and armed conflicts. They further emphasized that the goals of development could be achieved if there was no equality between man and women. It was considered vital to address the interface between the world economy, national development plans and the role of women.

59. Several representatives noted that, in order to meet the objectives of women's advancement and human development, gender analysis should be applied in designing and implementing macro- and micro-economic policies. Several representatives noted that gender training in planning development policies should be undertaken.

60. Some representatives stressed that multilateral and bilateral agencies, while elaborating and implementing macroeconomic policies and assistance programmes, should recognize the specific needs of women in development and ensure that those needs were fully taken into account, especially in terms of their access to social and public services and better income opportunities. Multilateral and bilateral agencies should extend their assistance to developing countries in their efforts to promote the goals of development. Other representatives noted that action should be aimed at increasing women's control over their lives through such means as better health, better income, better education and training, better access to science and technology, and entitlement to land and capital. Several representatives noted that measures in the area of development should be taken by multilateral and bilateral institutions, as well as by Governments, private organizations, trade unions and non-governmental organizations.

61. Several representatives emphasized that any measures in the area of development should take into account the needs and interests of different groups of women, including rural, disabled, refugee and displaced and elderly women.

62. Some representatives stressed that specific action should be taken to produce concepts and measures that reflect the value of unpaid work in national accounting systems and help to reconcile family and work responsibilities of both men and women. In that respect, the provision of child-care facilities of good quality and low cost, as well as other social support systems, were of vital importance as measures in that area to reduce the workload of women. Many representatives stressed the need for measures to promote the role of the father. A few representatives mentioned the need to design and introduce measures to improve the situation of women in home-based work, including the introduction of social security schemes.

63. A few representatives stressed the importance of entrepreneurship and management-training for women. Career guidance was necessary to promote women's employment opportunities and increase their upward and horizontal mobility. One representative noted the importance of introducing positive action programmes to increase female participation in non-traditional occupations and management. An ombudsman arrangement should be established to monitor the implementation of such measures. Several representatives emphasized the importance of legal literacy as a means of improving women's status in general and especially in the

sphere of employment. Women constitute a majority in the informal sector, so, as several representatives noted, specific measures should be taken to guarantee and improve their conditions. A few representatives noted that specific measures should be formulated on women migrants, providing protection of their interest in the labour market.

64. Many representatives stressed the importance of providing extensive and quality health services for women during their entire life cycle, taking into account the specific needs of elderly and disabled women. Special attention should be given to measures to prevent the AIDS pandemic among women. Several representatives stressed the importance of increasing women's access to information about and treatment of AIDS. Several representatives noted the need for national health programmes, which provide basic health services for women.

65. Many representatives emphasized that measures should be taken to improve women's education, including the elimination of illiteracy among them. In that respect, it was necessary to increase girls' enrolment in primary and secondary education and control their drop-outs. Education and training in non-traditional female occupations were a prerequisite for the improvement of women's employment opportunities. Several representatives stressed the need to promote women's interest in scientific and technical education, so that women could be beneficiaries of technological progress. A few representatives emphasized the importance of gender-sensitive education, the elimination of traditional stereotypes from curricula and textbooks and the corresponding gender-sensitive training of teachers. Some representatives stressed the importance of dissemination of gender studies and research. Several representatives mentioned the need for measures in the area of informal education.

66. Many representatives noted that measures should be taken to provide a healthy living and working environment for women. Action oriented towards preserving natural resources should form the foundation of any development policy. Several representatives stressed the need to increase the participation of women at all levels of decision-making concerning environmental issues.

67. With respect to participation of women in security forces, a question discussed in relation to the strategic objectives indicated under peace in document E/CN.6/WG/1994/CRP.1, some representatives stated that no emphasis should be put on ensuring equal participation of men and women in security forces. One representative considered it doubtful whether the introduction of women in the security forces would advance the status of women. Others, however, were of the view that a general increase, without insisting on a certain percentage, might be helpful for achieving equality in this area. With regard to United Nations peace-keeping missions, a target of 30 per cent or more women in the forces could be proposed. One delegation proposed action to ensure the participation of women in peace negotiations and conflict resolution. Women should get specific training in order to be part of the pool of qualified persons.

68. Several delegations noted that the issue of violence against women should be a separate strategic objective with its own catalogue of measures for the elimination of violence. Measures to combat harassment of women in the

workplace would be covered under this objective. Several delegations, referring to the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights in 1993, stated that an optional protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women should be introduced on the general right to complaints, which would not be restricted to issues of violence against women.

69. Violence against women in war and conflict situations, in particular rape, forced pregnancy and ethnic cleansing, needed to be considered as war crimes and crimes against humanity, and perpetrators should be prosecuted in accordance with international law. One delegation stated that persecution on the ground of gender should be acknowledged as a reason for seeking asylum. One delegation stressed the need for taking measures to combat the impact of warfare on the health, physical and psychological well-being of children and women. Another delegation stated that economic sanctions negatively affected the status of women. One delegation emphasized the importance of gender issues in the aftermath of war and post-conflict peace-building processes, in particular the question of repatriation of women refugees and the involvement of women in peace-keeping. Another delegation called for the inclusion of effective measures to eliminate all forms of xenophobia and racial discrimination. The elimination of violence against women needed to be monitored in any mandate that the United Nations was carrying out.

70. Many delegations considered the introduction of legislative measures an essential means to eliminate violence against women, but to be successful those measures needed to be accompanied, in a comprehensive way, by social and economic measures. Increasing women's legal literacy was one way to strengthen women's self-reliance and bargaining power. One representative stressed the importance of introducing gender-sensitive training for all professionals in the legal system. A few delegations called for the introduction of non-violent measures of conflict resolution into school curricula so as to promote a violence-free society. One delegation stressed that peace education was linked to peace and democratization and should start with parental education in the family. There was a general consensus that no indication of any percentage could be given at this stage concerning the transfer of resources from defence or other budgets to development budgets. As a general comment, one delegation stated that, to maintain consistency of the suggested actions and their link to the critical areas of concern, a strategic objective should address women in armed conflict and refugee and displaced women.

Annex II

ATTENDANCE

Members*

Algeria:	Hocine Sahraoui
Australia:	Richard Butler, Anastasia Carayanides, Martin Sharp, Anne Moores, Kathy Wong
Austria:	
Bahamas:	A. Missouri Sherman-Peter, Sharon Brennen-Haylock
Bangladesh:	Jamil Majid, Mohammad Sirajuddin Ahmed, Ismat Jahan
Belarus:	Aleksandr V. Vasilyev, Nikolai N. Lepeshko
Bulgaria:	Lyudmila Bozhkova, Vladlen Stefanov
Chile:	Consuelo Gazmuri, Fidel Coloma
China:	Wang Shuxian, Feng Cui, Du Yong, Zou XiaoQiao, Meng Xianying, Chen Wangxia, Huang Shu
Colombia:	Luis Fernando Jaramillo, María Francisca Arias
Costa Rica:	Emilia C. de Barish
Côte d'Ivoire:	Djénébou Kaba
Cuba:	Yolanda Ferrer, Rita Perreira
Cyprus:	Erato K. Markoullis
Ecuador:	Javier Ponce, José Rosenberg
Finland:	Tuulikki PetäjÄniemi, Sinikka Antila, Raili Lahnalampi
France:	Claire Aubin, Caroline Mechin, Pascal Maubert, Christina Vasak

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* Italy, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Rwanda, Zaire and Zambia were not represented at the session.

Guinea:	Moussokoro Sangare
Guinea-Bissau:	Maria Lurdes Vaz, Manuela L. da Rosa
India:	Lata Singh, T. P. Sreenivasan, S. K. Guha, M. Manimekalai
Iran (Islamic Republic of):	
Japan:	Makiko Sakai, Mitsuko Horiuchi, Jiro Usui, Harumi Katsumata
Kenya:	Philip Richard O. Owade, Johnson K. Sirma
Madagascar:	Mireille Rajaonson, Reine Raoelina
Malaysia:	Hamid-Don Fatimah, Mazlan Muhammad
Mexico:	Olga Pellicer, Yanerit Morgan, Ana María Martínez
Namibia:	Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah, Tonata Emvula, Nora Schimming-Chase, N. Shivute, Selma Ashipala, N. A. Nghifindaka
Netherlands:	Joke Swiebel, Barend van der Heijden, Bernadette Dougle, Louise de Bode-Olten, Désirée Bonis, Anne Offermans
Pakistan:	Sher Afgan Khan, Masood Khan, Tehmina Janjua
Peru:	Fernando Guillén, Jorge Lázaro
Philippines:	Patricia B. Licuanan, Narcisa L. Escaler, Linglingay F. Lacanlale, Imelda M. Nicolas, Ruth S. Limjuco
Republic of Korea:	Yeong Hyeon Lee, In Soon Yang, In Ja Hwang, Ji Ah Paik, Gi Dong Choi
Russian Federation:	Mikhail Lebedev, Ivan Khryskov
Slovakia:	Mária Kociánová, Miroslav Sedlák
Spain:	María José Montero, Juan José Urtasun
Sudan:	Mariam Osman Sir ElKhatim, Omer Mohamed Ahmed Siddig
Thailand:	Saisuree Chutikul, Sriwatana Chulajata, Vitavas Srivihok
Tunisia:	Slaheddine Abdellah, Holla Bach Tobji

United States of America: Arvonne S. Fraser, Patricia L. Gray, Gloria G. Rodriguez, Karen Nussbaum, Kathryn N. Skipper, Sharon B. Kotok, Robert T. Anthony, Harriett J. Harper, Katherine M. Blakeslee

Venezuela: Evangelina García-Prince, María Inés Fonseca

States Members of the United Nations represented by observers

Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Belgium, Benin, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Canada, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Gabon, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Malawi, Mali, Malta, Mongolia, Morocco, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Suriname, Sweden, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Viet Nam, Zimbabwe.

Non-member States represented by observers

Holy See, Switzerland.

United Nations

United Nations Children's Fund, United Nations Development Programme, International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, United Nations Development Fund for Women.

Specialized agencies

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, World Bank.

Intergovernmental organization represented by an observer

Commission of the European Communities.

Other organizations represented by observers

Palestine.

Non-governmental organizations

Category I: International Confederation of Free Trade Unions
International Council of Women
International Federation of Business and Professional Women
Society for International Development (SID)
Zonta International

Category II: Amnesty International
Bahá'í International Community
Change
Childhope
Disabled Peoples' International
Housewives in Dialogue
Human Rights Watch
International Association for Religious Freedom
International Federation of Settlements and Neighbourhood Centres (IFS)
International Federation of University Women
International Human Rights Law Group
International Social Science Council
National Council of German Women's Organizations - Federal Union of Women's Organizations and Women's Groups of German Associations E.V.
Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues (SPSSI)
Trickle-up Programme
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom
World Council of Credit Unions, Inc. (WCOCU)
World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations

Roster: International Women's Anthropology Conference, Inc. (IWAC)

Others: Wittenberg Center for Alternative Resources
Women's Environment and Development Organization

Annex III

LIST OF DOCUMENTS BEFORE THE WORKING GROUP

Document symbol	Agenda item	Title or description
E/CN.6/WG/1994/1	2	Provisional agenda
E/CN.6/WG/1994/2	2	List of non-governmental organizations recommended for accreditation
E/CN.6/WG/1994/L.1 and Add.1	4	Draft report of the Working Group
E/CN.6/WG/1994/CRP.1	3	Draft outline for the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women
E/CN.6/WG/1994/CRP.2 and Add.1-2	3	Draft outline for the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women
E/CN.6/WG/1994/NGO/1	3	Statement submitted by the National Council of German Women's Organizations - Federal Union of Women's Organizations and Women's Groups of German Associations E.V., a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, category II